7.5 OUTCOME OF ADVERTISING AND ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO COMMUNITY FUNDING POLICY

Attachments:
1. **Community Funding Policy**
2. **Community Consultation Comments**

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council ADOPTS the Community Funding Policy at Attachment 1.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To present the outcome of community consultation and seek approval of the proposed Community Funding Policy at **Attachment 1.**

DELEGATION:

Section 2.7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* sets out the Role of Council as being to 'determine the local government's policies'. There is no delegation to Administration to make, review or repeal policies.

BACKGROUND:

The existing Community Funding policy was scheduled for review in December 2025. This was brought forward following the 18 June 2024 Council meeting where a report recommending the revocation of Policy No 7.6.9 - Heritage Assistance Fund was considered. At this meeting, Council resolved:

'*Council DOES NOT SUPPORT the REVOCATION of Policy No 7.6.9 Heritage Assistance Fund, included as Attachment 9 and REQUESTS Administration presents a report to Council in December 2024 on the revocation of Policy No 7.6.9 Heritage Assistance Fund, as part of the Community Funding Policy review*'.

The revocation of Policy No.7.6.9 Heritage Assistance Fund is discussed in a separate item on this Council Meeting agenda.

At its 10 December 2024 meeting, Council approved conducting community consultation of its intention to amend the Community Funding Policy.

In accordance with the City's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy, community consultation was undertaken between 28 January – 18 February 2025.

DETAILS:

The City regularly receives requests from community groups, organisations and individuals for the provision of financial support towards projects, programs, events and other initiatives.

This Policy captures the various funding streams provided by the City and is supported by detailed guidelines, criteria and application forms for each funding category. These are updated from time-to-time to ensure Community Funding reflects Council and community priorities.

Examples of Current / Best Practice

The Community Funding opportunities outlined in this policy are solely for the purpose of delivering positive outcomes in the City of Vincent for the local community**.**

The review of this policy has considered similar local government policies including:

City of Stirling: Community Grants Funding Policy
City of Swan: City Grant and Sponsorship Funding

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Stakeholders and the broader community were provided with a number of ways to submit their feedback including an online survey on Imagine Vincent, in person, in writing, via email and by phone.

Communications Reach

Communications supporting the advertising of the policy amendment generated a reach of approximately 11,739 and comprised:

- News item on City's website on 28 January 2025;
- E-news sent to over 10,000 subscribers on 30 January and 13 February 2025;
- Business e-news with an estimated reach of 1,200 on 31 January 2025;
- Public Notice Advertising in Perth Now Central on 30 January 2025; and
- Notice on display at the Community Centre, Administration Centre and Library & Local History Centre.

The consultation page on Imagine Vincent attracted 63 views with ten link clicks.

Two submissions - one survey response and a submission in writing were received as at **Attachment 2.** The survey response has been noted by Administration.

The matters raised in the written submission relating to the Heritage Assistance Fund have been addressed in the report on that item.

Other matters raised in the submission are addressed below:

Lack of policy detail

Administration response: The intention of the revised policy is to provide a framework for funding while allowing flexibility to respond to community needs. The policy sets broad funding priorities with detailed criteria outlined in supporting guidelines.

Funding amounts can fluctuate depending on the annual budget. Removing funding limits or details of funding amounts from the policy ensures that funding decisions align with strategic objectives and allows adaptability in response to emerging issues.

Guidelines for each funding stream include eligibility criteria, funding limits and details of the assessment processes. These are publicly available on the City's website.

Accountability and oversight

Administration response: Council sets the strategic direction and funding priorities through the policy, while the administration manages the operational aspects. This is consistent with governance best practice.

Council will continue to have visibility of funding allocations through the annual budget process.

Fairness, consistency, and avoiding favouritism

Administration response: Clear assessment criteria and process for each funding stream ensures all applicants are treated equitably. Funding decisions align with the policy objectives.

The comment related to end-of-year allocations is noted.

Role of policies

Administration response: Policies define the overarching intent, principles and strategic direction. Procedures outline the step-by-step processes for implementation of the policy principles. This ensures that administrative matters can be amended as needed without requiring Council endorsement, ensuring efficiency and adaptability.

Community Support Grants

After additional internal consultation, it is proposed to change the name of the 'Community Support Grants' to 'Connected and Healthy Community Support Grants'. This aligns with the Strategic Community Plan priority and some of the objectives outlined in the Public Health Plan 2020-25. The grants could include help funding an activity that encourages, supports and celebrates health and wellbeing on topics such as mental health and wellbeing, physical activity or healthy eating.

LEGAL/POLICY:

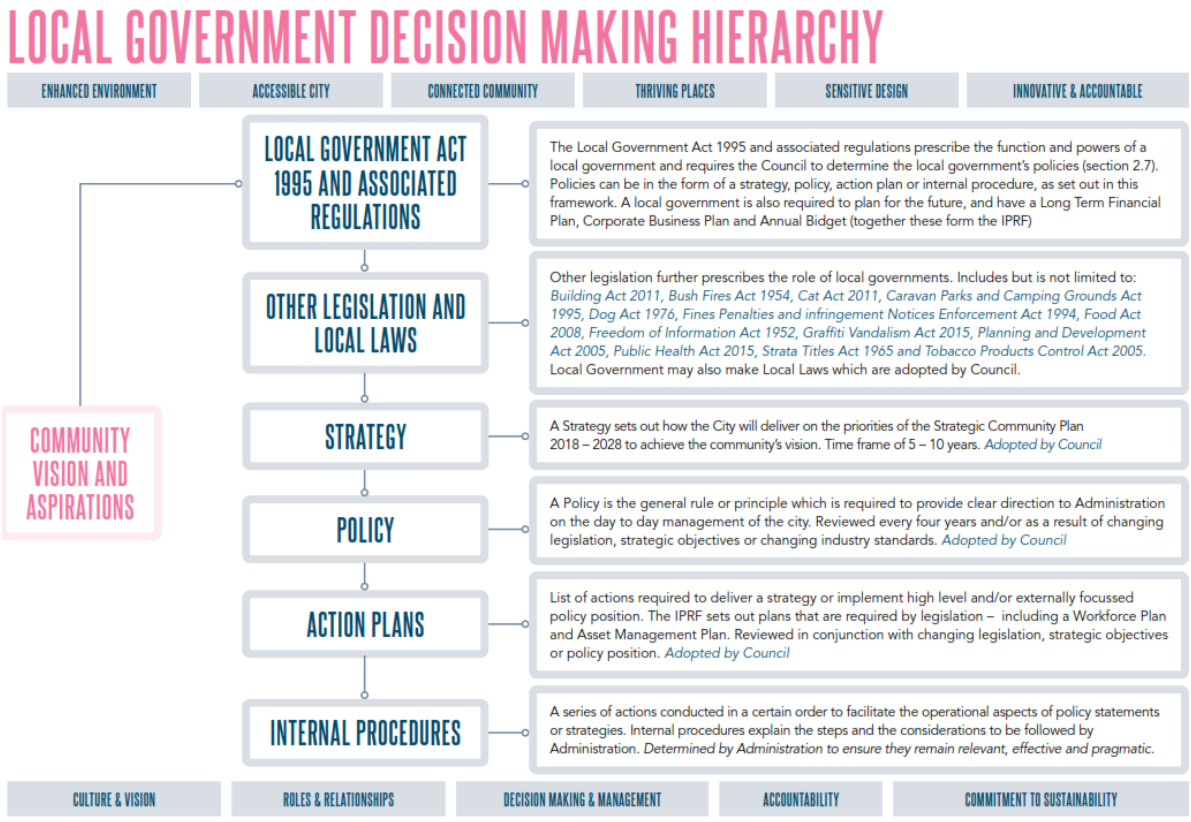
Section 2.7(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides Council with the power to determine policies.

The City's Policy Development and Review Policy sets out the process for the development and review of the City's policy documents.

In accordance with section 2.3 of the Policy Development and Review Policy:

The purpose of a policy is to provide a general rule or principle to guide Administration and the community on the City's decision making and advocacy;

The purpose of the policy is to provide financial assistance through grants, donations, sponsorships, waivers, and in-kind support to local groups, organisations, and individuals. The support is intended to help deliver positive outcomes for the local community, enhance social participation, promote inclusion, and strengthen connections within the City of Vincent. The policy outlines various funding categories, each with specific purposes and eligibility criteria, to align with both Council and community priorities.



RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Low: Adopting the proposed policy is low risk as the policy sets out how we spend money on grants, outlines council's position on grant spending, provides transparency to the community on areas where grant funding is available and reduces the risk of unplanned spending.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032*:

Connected and Healthy Community

We have enhanced opportunities for our community to build relationships and connections with each other and the City.
We are an inclusive, accessible and equitable City for all.

Innovative and Accountable

We engage with our community so they are involved in what we are doing and how we are meeting our goals.

Our decision-making process is consistent and transparent, and decisions are aligned to our strategic direction.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

This does not contribute to any environmental sustainability outcomes. This action/activity is environmentally neutral.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the following priority health outcomes of the City's *Public Health Plan 2020-2025*:

Increased mental health and wellbeing

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The availability of financial support remains subject to Community Funding allocations within Council's Annual Budget that may vary from year-to-year based upon Council and community priorities.

COMMUNITY FUNDING

CITY OF VINCENT

Legislation / local law requirements	Nil
Relevant delegations	Delegation 2.2.19 - Defer payment, grant discounts, waive fees or write off debts
Related policies, procedures and supporting documentation	Execution of Documents Policy Fraud and Corruption Prevention

PRELIMINARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Vincent offers a range of grants that are aimed at helping local people to take an active role in shaping our community. Community funding provides an opportunity to contribute towards the City's vibrancy and diversity by working collaboratively with a range of community groups, organisations, businesses and individuals to deliver initiatives that increase social participation, strengthen connections, build capacity and deliver economic and environmental benefits.

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines the Community Funding opportunities available from the City of Vincent, with the purpose and eligibility criteria for each funding category then guiding the level of financial support that may or may not be provided.

The Community Funding opportunities outlined in this policy are solely for the purpose of delivering positive outcomes in the City of Vincent for the local community.

Applications for funding will not necessarily be approved and any initiatives that have previously been supported through Community Funding cannot be guaranteed in future years. The availability of funding remains subject to Community Funding allocations within Council's Annual Budget that may vary from year-to-year.

OBJECTIVE

- To provide financial assistance through grants, sponsorship, donations, waivers and in-kind support to assist groups, organisations and individuals to deliver positive community outcomes.
- To use community funding as a strategic opportunity to strengthen quality of life within Vincent through improved community engagement, partnerships and participation.
- To complement and support both Council and community priorities through a range of community funding initiatives.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all requests from community groups, organisations, businesses, schools and individuals for the provision of financial support towards projects, programs, events and other initiatives that service the Vincent community.

COMMUNITY FUNDING

CITY OF VINCENT

Conflict of Interest

Officers assessing grants have a responsibility to declare any conflict of interest with an applicant or project.

Financial Considerations

The total funding pool of the Community Grants Program will be listed in the City's Corporate Business plan and included in the Annual Budget and approved by Council each year. Grant applications are assessed and approved by Administration based upon funding category guidelines and criteria.

POLICY PROVISIONS

DEFINITIONS

Applicant means a group, organisation or individual applying for grant funding.

Donation is a cash contribution to an organisation or group for the purpose of assisting an activity, event or program with a charitable, welfare or community service orientated purpose.

Emergency Relief Donation is a charitable contribution of essential goods and/or services made to eligible residents during a declared state of emergency.

Fees and Charges are stipulated monetary amounts established through Council's Annual Fees and Charges Schedule and levied where an organisation, group or individual seeks the use of a City of Vincent managed facility or reserve.

Grant is a cash contribution made to an organisation or group for the sole purpose of delivering a specific project with mutually agreed outcomes and performance measures. Grants must be fully acquitted at the conclusion of the project.

In-kind donation is a contribution to an organisation or group through the provision of City of Vincent services, resources and facilities although no monies are physically exchanged.

Sponsorship is a cash and/or in-kind contribution to an organisation or group for a specific purpose or event where the City of Vincent receives public recognition for its contribution in a manner negotiated by both parties. Sponsorship must be fully acquitted at the conclusion of the project or event.

POLICY

Funding Category	Eligibility	Overview
Connected & Healthy Community Support Grants	Not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, and registered charities	Funding for programs, projects and services that demonstrate outcomes that will build a strong and resilient community as well as initiatives that ensure the ongoing sustainability of community organisations.
Youth Development Grants	Young people	Funding to support young people who are dedicated to addressing key social, economic and environmental issues within the Vincent community. Focus areas include community and social entrepreneurship, environment and sustainability, arts and creative expression, and leadership and personal development.

COMMUNITY FUNDING

CITY OF VINCENT

Funding Category	Eligibility	Overview
Collaborative Grants	Service delivery agencies, not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and registered charities	Partnerships with service delivery agencies that reside and/or operate within our local community in order to effectively respond to a recognised community focus area as endorsed by Council. The focus area will be reviewed every three years to ensure alignment with Council priorities and community demands.
Sports Participation Grants	Not-for-profit organisations, State sporting associations and sport and recreation clubs.	To support City of Vincent based sport and recreation clubs and State Sporting Associations to establish activities, programs or projects that promote and encourage participation and opportunity with a participant focus on females, juniors, diversity and inclusion in sport.
Festival and Event Sponsorship	Not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, and registered charities	Funding for the delivery of festivals, events and other similar activities which contribute to community vibrancy. Sponsorship will be provided through direct funding and/or in-kind services with the level of support determined by the value to the Vincent community in terms of economic, cultural and social outcomes. Funding amounts are awarded based on alignment with the Guidelines and Criteria as well as Council priorities.
Town Team Grants	Town Teams	Funding to deliver initiatives that improve the performance of town centres and districts, events and/or assistance with their ongoing governance and sustainability.
Environmental Grants	Schools, not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, and registered charities	Funding for the implementation of local projects or initiatives that align with the objectives of the City of Vincent *Sustainable Environment Strategy*.
Heritage Assistance Fund	Property owners with a place on the City of Vincent Local Heritage List and/or State Register of Heritage Places or within a heritage area	Funding towards heritage conservation projects to places of heritage significance. Applicants should also refer to the applicable Policy or Guidelines as amended.
Heritage Plaques Program	Property owners and not- for-profit organisations	Funding towards the installation of a plaque or alterative form of interpretation to recognise and celebrate places of heritage interest in the City of Vincent that are either in situ or have been demolished. Applicants should also refer to the applicable Policy or Guidelines as amended.
Active Transport Schools Grants	Schools	Financial assistance for schools located within the City of Vincent towards active transport events, bike education and as an additional source of funding for schools participating in the Department of Transport's Your Move Connecting Schools program. The grants aim to encourage, support and celebrate children, parents and staff in the City to choose active transport options to get to and from school.

COMMUNITY FUNDING

CITY OF VINCENT

Funding Category	Eligibility	Overview
Active Transport Community Initiatives Grants	Not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, and registered charities	Provide financial assistance to eligible community groups and not-for-profit organisations to help fund community programs that promote or assist the community to engage in active transport. The grant can be applied to the presentation of a one off event or the development of a program which encourages, supports or celebrates initiatives that promote Vincent residents choosing active transport options.
Transport Assistance	Residents with demonstrated difficulty accessing transport to attend medical appointments	Transport Assistance for eligible residents who have difficulty accessing transport to and from medical appointments. Assistance is provided through prepaid taxi vouchers.
Property Assistance Fund	Residents requiring property repairs to prevent serving of a notice under Section 135 of the *Health Act 1911* or Schedule 3.1 of the *Local Government Act 1995*	Assistance with undertaking repairs on a property and/or remove items to prevent the serving of a notice under Section 135 of the Health Act 1911 "Unfit for Human Habitation" or Schedule 3.1 of the Local Government Act 1995. Such support is provided where an individual requires financial assistance to improve the condition of their premises with any funds paid directly to service providers/businesses engaged to undertake the works. No funds are paid to the individual(s) inhabiting the property. Determinations regarding the provision of Special Welfare Assistance and the amounts required are made by Administration on a case-by-case basis.
Donations	Not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, registered charities and individuals	Funding support towards the delivery of projects, programs or services. The applicant must identify the specific community need.
Waiving of Fees	Not-for-profit organisations, clubs, associations, social enterprises, registered charities and individuals	The waiving or reduction of fees for community groups, organisations and individuals will be considered where such assistance supports the delivery of projects, programs, services or fundraising initiatives. The applicant must identify the specific community benefits associated with their activity and demonstrate their limited financial capacity to pay relevant fees and are assessed against a criteria matrix. This may include (but is not limited to): • The hire of community facilities and town halls (bonds excluded) • Banner pole hire • Road closures/obstructions and special event parking • The hire of parks, reserves and playing fields • Street entertainment and busking permits • Stall Holder / Trader Permits (except food related stalls) • Beatty Park Leisure Centre and facility usage fees. Waiver requests are assessed and approved by Administration and are based on the outcome of the criteria matrix. Applicants may be eligible for a reduction or waiver of fees up to $2,000 each financial year. Requests for a reduction or waiver over $2,000 will require Council approval in accordance with the Delegation of Authority.

COMMUNITY FUNDING

CITY OF VINCENT

Funding Category	Eligibility	Overview
Emergency Relief Donations	Residents	Relief provided to residents who are considered vulnerable due to experiencing hardship or being at risk of hardship during a declared State of Emergency. The donation shall be in the form of the purchase of essential goods and/or services for the affected resident. No cash donations are permitted under this funding stream. Administration will determine the level of need on a case-by-case basis and following investigation of whether appropriate assistance is available through other existing emergency relief programs or services.
Trees of Significance Assistance Fund	Property owners of trees listed on the Trees of Significance Inventory	Financial assistance for owners with trees listed on the Trees of Significance Inventory who may be eligible for financial assistance for work associated with the listed tree through the City's Trees of Significance Incentive Fund. Applicants should also refer to Local Planning Policy: Trees of Significance as amended. Owners of with trees listed on the Trees of Significance Inventory may be eligible for financial assistance for work associated with the listed tree through the City's Trees of Significance Incentive Fund. Applicants should also refer to the applicable Policy or Guidelines as amended.
Business Enhancement Grants	Businesses and commercial property owners	Financial assistance to businesses and commercial property to make small-scale improvements that enhance the street appeal, presentation and functionality of the City's neighbourhoods and town centres.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Responsible Officer	Executive Manager Communications and Engagement
Initial Council Adoption	Date: 24/07/2018, Ref# D17/67260
Reviewed / Amended	Date: 24/07/2018, Ref#: D19/36552 Date: 18/09/2018, Ref#: D19/133707 Date: 14/12/2021, Ref#: D21/20836
Next Review Date	Date: 17/12/2025

Attachment 2: Community Consultation Comments

	Do you support the proposed amendments to the Community Funding Policy	Please provide any comments about the Community Funding Policy	Would you like to be kept updated on this Policy?
1	Yes	No	No

I strongly object to the removal of the Heritage Assistance Fund Policy. I also have concerns with the move to water down the funding policy so that is nothing more than a wishy-washy list of areas for dishing out money to community groups, with very little detail as to what will be funded and what won't be funded, and providing very little oversight by the council.

Policies exist provide guidance to the community, staff and decision makers about how the City will deal with various situations. The reason for having policies include ensuring that people are treated fairly, equally and consistently. It aids the staff by giving guidance about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

Ratepayers and residents elect council members to represent their interests, and one of the roles is to develop and maintain policy in the best interests of the community.

Over time the council has been abrogating this responsibility and leaving it up to the administration to manage areas without providing any clear policy guidance. Unfortunately, this funding policy, and the proposal to remove the heritage funding policy, and simply go to a system of 'guidelines' that are developed by the administration without council input or review, are classic examples.

The policies should explicitly state what criteria will be used when deciding who will get ratepayers' money and how much they will get. If you read through the draft policy you see that the bulk of it is made up of vague 'overviews' that give very little detail. For example: what can you tell from "*Funding for programs, projects and services that demonstrate outcomes that will build a strong and resilient community as well as initiatives that ensure the ongoing sustainability of community organisations*." That is as vague as all hell. And there isn't even an indication if we are talking about $1,000 projects or $100,000 projects!

The staff are continually using the argument that "this is an administrative matter" to remove the council from the process. While the actual processing of requests, making payments, and reviewing acquittals is administrative, the criteria used should be policy based and should be decided by the community's representatives.

One of the reasons for having policies that I previously mentioned is for consistency. By that I mean consistency within a funding round, but also across years. Without having publicly available policies there is a risk that different groups will be treated in an inconsistent manner. When you have inconsistent treatment it raises questions of fairness, favouritism and possible conflicts of interest.

There have been suggestions that amounts to be paid may vary over time depending upon how much money is available, which is a polite way of saying how much money is left over. It is a common 'public service' practice to have an end-of-year spendathon to spend unallocated funds. I expect that this happens in Vincent, or will happen in

Vincent if it is left to the administration to be able to modify guidelines at the drop of a hat. I think there have even been suggestions that this may happen in the heritage funding area (i.e. we didn't get as many applicants, so we decided to raise the maximum funding from $5,000 to $10,000).

Of course, there will be denials but I'd suggest looking back at Town Team Grants over the last few years and seeing how many were made at the end of the financial year, for uses that looked questionable.

By having exact criteria and stipulating maximum levels for each individual grant the community can see that everybody is treated the same. In previous policies a maximum was set with the proviso that it be adjusted to reflect CPI changes. While this resulted in odd figures it seemed to work. The alternative is for the budget to specify a total for a funding stream with a maximum for any one claim (i.e. $65,000 with a

maximum payment to any one application of $5,000).

So I totally reject the direction the administration is leading the council.

As to the heritage funding grants: I believe the policy should be retained and modified and that funding grants be restricted to Category 1 properties; or possibly Category 1 and Category 2. These were properties which were previously identified as 'conservation essential'. I believe that the payments should only be made on the basis of repairs that are essential to retain heritage elements. They should not be used for maintenance payments that are just the result of the age of the building.

A lot of payments have been made for work that has nothing to do with heritage elements/characteristics. In many cases they have just been a form of middle-class welfare. Owners of buildings on the list (albeit as old category B or in 'heritage areas') have received grants to do works whereas owners in the immediate area who have had similar properties, but which were not listed, have received no assistance to do similar work. The fact that one property was listed and another was not reflects the poor listing process and not the actual state of the properties.

So I think the Heritage Assistance Funding policy should be retained but it should be modified so that only true heritage work is funded.